



Government of Québec

In the 2021 *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People*, published on this date last year, the gouvernement du Québec reiterated its commitment to combating violence against Indigenous women and girls and, with Indigenous partners, to implementing its own actions in its areas of jurisdiction.

It is in the same vein that the gouvernement du Québec is proud to present today to its population and Indigenous partners an overview of the concrete steps taken in 2021–2022 to improve living conditions for Indigenous peoples, and particularly Indigenous women and girls in Québec. These actions are meant to address the recommendations of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec (the Viens Commission) and of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG), including the 21 recommendations laid out in the report specific to Québec.

In June 2021, in response to Call for Justice 20 in the NIMMIWG report specific to Québec, the Parliament of Québec passed the *Act to authorize the communication of personal information to the families of Indigenous children who went missing or died after being admitted to an institution*. This Act, which came into force September 1st, 2021, aims to support families in their search for information on health and social services institutions and religious congregations, particularly on the circumstances surrounding the disappearance or death of their child after the child was admitted to one of these institutions. The Act overrides certain access to information regimes by allowing specific personal information about a child to be communicated to their extended family or any significant person. The Act is to be carried out by several stakeholders: the special advisor for family support, Ms. Anne Panasuk; the Direction de soutien aux familles, created as part of the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones at the same time as this Act came into force; and the Association des familles Awacak. The monitoring committee on the Act was created in October 2021, as well, and has been holding working meetings since then. During 2021, 17 femicides were committed in Québec, three of them against Nunavik women. The premier ministre, François Legault, responded to this terrible occurrence by mandating the vice-première ministre and ministre de la Sécurité publique, Ms. Geneviève Guilbault, to lead a committee on stopping crimes against women. This committee has worked on priority efforts relating to domestic violence and the femicides. Four of these efforts were announced on June 3rd, 2021, and were specifically aimed at First Nations and Inuit:

- Increase funding of emergency shelters in Indigenous¹ communities under agreement and urban centres for women and children facing domestic violence;

1 Under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement, the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi nations take over numerous responsibilities in areas such as health and social services, education and income security, and were granted funding to that end.

- Support culturally relevant local services that help Indigenous women and men, as well as their relatives, in the healing process after domestic violence;
- Support the development of culturally relevant and safe services for prevention and intervention in domestic violence in Nunavik, in collaboration with Inuit partners; and,
- Add domestic violence personnel to the Indigenous police force to ensure that victims are better cared for and perpetrators monitored more closely throughout all stages of the process.

Note that some of these priority efforts are in addition to the 2020 budget's announced investment of \$200 million over five years for implementing the recommendations of the NIMMIWG and the Viens Commission. Nine departments and agencies have put forward 35 structural measures over the course of 2021–2022 to cover a range of issues and recommendations, including:

- Incorporating cultural safety into the health and social services network;
- Access to justice and training for Indigenous police force personnel;
- Funding consolidation for two student residence complexes with communal spaces and affordable housing for Indigenous students in Sept-Îles and Trois-Rivières, and beginning the process of constructing a third centre in Québec City; and,
- Developing an implementation plan for incorporating Indigenous content into the Quebec school curriculum, in collaboration with First Nations and Inuit.

As part of a collaborative process of working with Indigenous organizations against domestic violence, the gouvernement du Québec has allocated funding for projects developed by and for Indigenous peoples, with a request for proposals from the Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the ministère de la Justice. Funding has also been granted to the Québec City organization Maison communautaire Missinak, to create a transition house to shelter Indigenous women and children who have been the victims of domestic violence and provide them with affordable housing and psychosocial support services.

Furthermore, in December 2021, the gouvernement du Québec launched the *Plan d'action gouvernemental 2021-2026 en réponse aux recommandations de la Commission spéciale sur l'exploitation sexuelle des mineurs* [2021–2026 governmental action plan in response to the recommendations of the Select Committee on the Sexual Exploitation of Minors]. This includes 10 measures tailored to the Indigenous context and four steps specifically for Indigenous peoples.

The gouvernement du Québec and Indigenous organizations have also continued their efforts through the work of the Comité femmes autochtones [Indigenous women committee]. Over the course of 2021–2022, the committee identified work priorities, which will be studied over the next year in order to inspire new government efforts.

Lastly, the *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit 2017–2022* came to an end during 2021–2022. This action plan included more than 26 measures aimed at Indigenous women and children. The process of renewing the action plan is underway. Many Indigenous organizations and elected leaders have already been heard from, including those who represent the interests of Indigenous women and children in Québec. The new action plan will come out in 2022 and will strengthen the government's response to the inquiry commissions.

The gouvernement du Québec is more committed than ever to supporting Indigenous women and children socially and economically, intensifying its work against the diverse forms of violence they suffer and continuing the search for information about Indigenous children who went missing or died after being admitted to an institution. The gouvernement du Québec will strengthen its efforts to respond to the recommendations of the NIMMIWG and the Viens Commission, in partnership with Indigenous organizations of Québec. It also is committed to taking into account the needs expressed by the First Nations and Inuit of Québec as part of its action plans and anti-violence work currently underway. The gouvernement du Québec considers the conditions that Indigenous women and children live in to be of fundamental importance, and, in collaboration with Indigenous partners, will continue to pursue efforts to improve those conditions.

